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In short, Greece may now take pride in the possession of three great collections of ancient sculpture, each of which possesses features in which it can account itself second to none. When the German archæological corps takes its final leave of Olympia, the Greek direction will remain: it is only to be hoped the Ministry of Public Instruction will provide what the German direction, amid many difficulties, has still supplied, to wit, the means by which special research can alone become possible on a site remote from the facilities of large centres of population, and to which it is practically impossible to bring even the most necessary handbooks, plans, *etc.* *Noblesse oblige*, and the well-planned general reorganization of the Greek archæological administration and service leads us to expect much.

ALFRED EMERSON.

Olympia, Greece,
March 20, 1887.

LETTER FROM SIDON, PHŒNICIA.

It has long been well known that the plain and the hills about ancient Sidon are full of interesting antiquities. The pots filled with 8,000 coins of Philip and Alexander, the sarcophagus of Ashmunazer with its Phœnician inscription, and other finds, have aroused general interest in the subject of hid treasure. At present all excavations are conducted by laborers who quarry for stones. The building-stones that they sell nearly repay them for their work, while any antiquities found in the rubbish of ruined buildings or in unopened tombs make the work remunerative. No systematic exploration has been conducted since the French occupation of 1860, when the necropolis south of the city was excavated. Two years ago hundreds of tombs were discovered and opened at the foot of the hills east of the city. These were all of the Roman period and yielded a harvest of trinkets, but nothing of historical value.

Lately, some workmen, while they were digging in an open field about a mile to the north-east of Sidon, came upon a shaft, about twenty feet square, sunk in the sandstone. When this was cleared of earth to the depth of 30 feet, a doorway was found in each of the four perpendicular walls. These openings had been built up with stonework; and, by the removal of a few of these stones, access was obtained to the rooms. The floor, walls, and roofs of these rooms were of the natural rock without any traces of plaster. This is in contrast with the Roman tombs referred to, most of which were plastered and some richly frescoed. Entering first the *south room*, two large sarcophagi meet the eye: the one on the right, of black marble highly polished, but without any ornamentation; the other, of pure

white marble and of large proportions, the cover of which is of one piece of marble in the form of a grand arch with closed ends. From the four corners project lion-heads. On the front end of the lid stand two symbolic figures, facing each other, with uplifted wings, having the body of a beast and the head of an eagle. At the rear are two similar figures, differing in having the body of a bird and a human head: the aspect of these figures is majestic. Below the ornamented cornice which encircles the sarcophagus, are figures in relief: on the front end, two centaurs facing each other attack a fallen warrior who tries to protect himself by a shield; on the other end also are two centaurs, carrying a captured stag between them; one of the centaurs bears on his shoulder a tree like a gigantic arrow; from the body of each hangs a cloak, the corners of which are ornamented with lion-heads. The two sides are alike: first, two men together, with four rampant horses ahead of them; these horses trample upon a lion in the one case and a wild boar in the other; the steeds are not abreast, and their heads are turned outwards and backwards. In front of this group are two more human figures with four horses. Below, is a border about 6 inches wide, filled with representations of hunting scenes. The whole sarcophagus is about 10 ft. long, 8 ft. to top of the arch of lid, and $5\frac{1}{2}$ wide. These measurements are only estimates made under difficulties. As the chamber is small, it was only with the greatest difficulty that I could squeeze between the sarcophagus and the walls. The opening was so small that there could be no good ventilation, and the two lighted candles which I had with me, if held near the ground, went out. My companion became dizzy and faint, so my stay was short. To add to the discomfort, water was dripping from the roof, making a thick mud upon the floor. This and the other chambers had all been entered some time in the past by treasure-hunters who moved the covers to one side, where that was possible, or broke a hole in the front of the sarcophagus. In these tombs were found three human skeletons and five dogs' skulls, probably greyhounds.

After waiting a few hours for the workmen to clear the entrance to the *east room*, I descended again and found in it two sarcophagi, a large sculptured one on the right, and a plain one on the left: both of the finest white marble. The large sarcophagus is in the form of a Greek temple: the lid representing the roof and the tomb the body of the temple. The ridge has at each end carved ornamentation [akroteria], while the slopes of the roof are cut to represent flat rectangular tiles; strips of metal cover the joints of the tiles and are surmounted by carved knobs where they cross the ridge. Above the eaves there rises and extends along the length of the sarcophagus an entablature, about a foot in height, on which is sculptured the funeral procession: two female mourners lead the procession, then come two horses with men walking beside them, the steeds having neither saddles

nor bridles; then four horses abreast drawing a chariot in which stands a warrior, followed by four more horses drawing the covered funeral car; this is followed by two figures on foot. The ends are richly ornamented with cornices and carved work, and in the tympanum are three figures, all expressive of grief: a male figure reclining with face buried in his hands, a standing figure, and a female in the other angle: at regular distances from the edges of the eaves are projecting dog-heads. The body of the sarcophagus is carved to represent a cella surrounded by a portico, with eighteen small statues, about three feet high, between the columns: three of these stand at either end, and six upon each side. The capitals of the columns are Ionic, with the exception of those at the four corners which are Doric. The statues are of beautiful workmanship and finish: all are female figures expressive of grief in various ways, and are entirely draped, though the forms of the muscles and the shape of the limbs can be easily followed. The temple rests upon a low *podium*, the four sides of which are covered with representations of hunting scenes. Débris about the base prevented me from studying the details carefully, but I remember a stag pursued by hunters with a dog leaping upon its back. The whole effect of this finely proportioned and richly ornamented temple with the impressive row of statues was one not easily forgotten. Unfortunately, a hole had been broken in the front, and at the same time part of the right entablature of the lid was broken off. With these exceptions, the whole is in a perfect state of preservation: it looks as clear in color and as perfect in detail as if just from the sculptor's hand: I did not notice a nose or finger gone, nor a scratch upon the highly polished surface. The eyeballs of the marble figures had been painted; also, there were traces of coloring upon the robes of the smaller figures; most of this, however, had been washed off by the dripping moisture, and wherever touched by the finger the paint came off. The *north room* contained only a plain sarcophagus.

I next entered the *west room*, which was empty; but since then a fine sarcophagus has been found beneath the floor. From this I passed into another and larger chamber where stood four sarcophagi, all of white marble: three of these were comparatively plain: ridge-roofed covers with tiles, and cornices and borders of vines the only ornamentation. The chief sarcophagus, however, far exceeded any of the former ones in the fulness and variety of the scenes, in the graphic expression of the various passions, in minuteness of detail, and in the fine preservation of the colors of the painted portions. I was permitted only a hurried view of this remarkable work of art. The tiles of the sloping roof are not flat and rectangular, but more like pointed leaves with edges slightly upturned; at each end of the ridge stand headless rampant figures supporting a carved shell ornament [*anthemion akroteria*]; on each of the four corners is a crouching lion; and above the

eaves on each side a row of human heads looking out from beneath an arch of leaves; while below is a row of stag-heads with curved horns. In the tympana at the ends are battle-scenes: a warrior lies dead, in one corner, while opposite him is another, evidently wounded; his helmet has fallen behind him, and he is crouching behind a large oval shield to protect himself from his assailants. The warriors upon this sarcophagus were of two kinds: one kind, mostly equestrian, are represented with blue eyes, scarlet cloaks, blue tunics, crested helmets, with long straight swords, greaves, and a few wearing sandals; the shields are of various shapes, and some richly adorned, one is painted on the inside to represent the circle of the heavens with stars, while other shields have upon them figures of animals. Among these, the mounted warriors have under them flat padded saddle-cloths richly worked and painted with bright colors. The other class of combatants represent barbarians, but of what nation I could not tell. They wear peaked caps whose long point is toward the back of the head, and have a cloth wrapped about the head covering both cheeks, and also drawn across the face below the nostrils covering mouth and chin. These are more scantily dressed than their opponents, and seem to be the vanquished. The battle-scenes are numerous and vividly represented. In one case, a warrior seizes by the hair of the head his enemy,¹ who has fallen upon his knees, and plunges a sword into his shoulder, while the blood trickles to the ground. Both the ends and one side are thus crowded with fighting figures, some of whom are mounted, while others are on foot. The other side is devoted to the representation of a chase in which all the hunters are barbarians. One man has his hands extended as if he had just discharged an arrow; another, on horseback, is thrusting with a spear; while an attendant carries a bow. The main interest centers in a horseman attacked by a lion: the horse is rearing while the lion has fastened his teeth in the horse's shoulder. The terror and agony of the animal are evident; his nostrils are dilated with fear, and the skin above them is wrinkled; the rider can hardly keep his seat; the other horsemen and hunters are rushing to the rescue, and a dog has seized the lion by the leg. Beside these scenes with figures, the sarcophagus is adorned with much fine ornamental work: below elaborate cornices are two bands of ornamentation, one composed of two parallel lines worked into rectangular figures [meander fret?], the other a vine curving in the "line of beauty:" the background to this vine was painted.

As I walked about this sarcophagus, the surprises which met my eye rendered it difficult to make mental notes. That I was fortunate in seeing what I did, is evident, for from that hour no European has been allowed to enter the excavations. Anything like measurements, notes, or photographs,

¹ In the account of this scene given by an Arab newspaper, this figure is said to be a woman: see *News*, under PHœNICIA.

was wholly out of the question. If this jealous care were in the interest of preserving these treasures, there would be no objection: but a Moslem visitor has since brought away an arm which he had broken off one of the figures. Since my visit, seven other sarcophagi have been found: one sculptured on all sides, another with the lid in the shape of the human figure: the face and head-dress are described as of the Egyptian type, resembling the figure on the tomb of Ashmunazer. Only one tomb has been found as yet unrifled, and that contained decayed wood or decayed mummy-remains, a vase of alabaster 10 inches high, a gold ring with stone, and a gold chain² weighing over 100 grammes; also a gold frontlet of small size.

It is very singular that, up to the present time, no inscription of any sort has been found on either walls or sarcophagi. About 300 coins were picked up at the foot of the shaft, but they were immediately taken to the governor, and I have not seen any of them. Either the material, or the finished work, of all these tombs must have been brought from some other country, as there is no such marble in Syria.

At present, the place is guarded by soldiers day and night, the doors to these chambers are fastened and sealed, and the local authorities are awaiting instructions from Constantinople.³

W. K. EDDY.

Sidon,
March, 1887.

² Mr. Eddy succeeded in obtaining this beautiful chain.

³ If the Government decide to transport these precious monuments to Constantinople, let us hope that their fate will differ from that described by Mr. F. E. Hoskins, who writes us, May 4, 1887: "Two years ago I saw them unearth a handsome sarcophagus in the Orange gardens at Sidon: a guard sat on it for a week, and then the authorities decided to move it into the city. So, they sent out men who deliberately smashed the marble with sledge-hammers, and carried it into the city on the backs of donkeys: it was deposited in the yard of the French Khan—a government building—and there it still lies in the mud."

It is said (*London Times*, April 7) that Beshara Effendi is excavating a tunnel for the removal of the sculptures to the sea-shore, with a view to their shipment to Constantinople.